

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) A method of producing rolling elements for a rolling bearing, comprising:

placing a wire material of predetermined length in a space that is defined by at least first and second molds and has a predetermined shape;

forge-forming the wire material into a blank ball for each rolling elements, said blank ball including an outer diameter portion becoming a rolling contact face that has curvatures in an axial direction thereof and a radial direction normal to the axial direction and including at least one plane; and

removing an extra flesh from the outer diameter portion of the blank ball, to thereby produce each of the rolling elements,

wherein the blank ball thus forge-formed has a connecting portion that is located between the rolling contact face and one of the at least one plane the connecting portion having a predetermined radius of curvature.

11. (Original) The method according to claim 10, further comprising:

releasing the blank ball thus forge-formed from the space, before the removing step is carried out.

12-32. (Canceled)

33. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, further comprising:

forming a slightly dimpled recess at a central position of the plane at the same time as forge-forming blank balls.

34. (Previously Presented) A method of producing rolling elements comprising:
(a) incorporating a wire material into a mold;
(b) forge-forming the wire material into a blank ball having at least one plane for each of the rolling elements; and
(c) ejecting the blank ball outside of the mold,
wherein a predetermined radius of curvature is forge formed at a connecting portion located between a rolling contact face and said at least one plane on said blank ball.

35. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 34, further comprising:
removing an extra flesh from the blank ball, to thereby produce each of the rolling elements.

36. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 34, wherein at (b), said blank ball thus forge-formed has an outer diameter portion becoming a rolling contact face that has curvatures in an axial direction thereof and a radial direction normal to the axial direction of the blank ball, .

37. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 34, wherein (c) further includes ejecting the blank ball of each of the rolling elements outside of the mold by an ejector pin.

38 - 43. (Canceled).